<u>IN THE CLAIMS</u>:

The following is a complete listing of the claims in this application, reflects all changes currently being made to the claims, and replaces all earlier versions and all earlier listings of the claims:

Claim 1. (currently amended): An authentication method of an image processing system in which a host computer, an authentication apparatus and an image processing apparatus are connected to a network, the method comprising:

<u>a first request step of, at the host computer, issuing a request for authentication to the image processing apparatus when the host computer remotely operates the image processing apparatus;</u>

a transmission step of, at the image processing apparatus, transmitting data for specifying the authentication apparatus<u>, which performs an authentication process on an operation level of the remote operation,</u> to the host computer in a case where the host computer <u>is authenticated in response to the request in the first request step</u> ~~remotely operates the image processing apparatus~~;

<u>a second request step of, at the host computer, issuing a request for the authentication process to the authentication apparatus based on the data transmitted in the transmission step;</u>

an authentication step of, at the ~~host computer~~ <u>authentication apparatus, performing the authentication process in response to the request in the second request step</u> ~~causing the authentication apparatus specified by the data to perform an authentication process~~

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~~with respect to an operation level of the remote operation from the host computer to the image processing apparatus~~; and

a remote operation step of, at the host computer, remotely operating the image processing apparatus in accordance with the operation level authenticated ~~by the authentication apparatus~~ in ~~said~~ the authentication step.

Claim 2. (currently amended): The method according to claim 1, wherein the data transmitted in the transmission step includes add-on software ~~including the data is transmitted to the host computer~~, and the host computer requests the authentication apparatus ~~in said authentication step~~ to effect execution of the authentication process ~~is executed~~ by the add-on software.

Claim 3. (currently amended): The method according to claim 2, wherein the authentication ~~process~~ step is performed using codes transmitted in the second request step ~~stored in the host computer~~ and a dictionary which defines operation levels with respect to the image processing apparatus.

Claim 4. (previously presented): The method according to claim 3, wherein the dictionary is contained in the authentication apparatus on the network.

Claim 5. (previously presented): The method according to claim 4, wherein the data is an address of the authentication apparatus on the network.

Claim 6. (previously presented): The method according to claim 1, wherein the remote operation is at least one of download, browsing, printing, and transfer.

Claim 7. (currently amended): An image processing system ~~in which~~ comprising:

a host computer, an authentication apparatus and an image processing apparatus ~~are~~ connected to a network~~, comprising:~~:

a first request unit configured to, at said host computer, issue a request for authentication to said image processing apparatus when said host computer remotely operates said image processing apparatus;

a transmission unit configured to, at said image processing apparatus, transmit data for specifying the authentication apparatus, which performs an authentication process on an operation level of the remote operation, to said host computer in a case where said host computer is authenticated in response to the request by said first request unit ~~remotely operates said image processing apparatus~~;

a second request unit configured to, at said host computer, issue a request for the authentication process to said authentication apparatus based on the data transmitted by said transmission unit;

an authentication unit configured to, at ~~the host computer~~ said authentication apparatus, perform the authentication process in response to the request by said second request unit ~~cause the authentication apparatus specified by the data to perform an authentication process with respect to an operation level of the remote operation from the host computer to the image processing apparatus~~; and

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a remote operation unit configured to, at the host computer, remotely operate ~~the~~ said image processing apparatus in accordance with the operation level authenticated by said authentication apparatus.

Claims 8 and 9. (canceled).

Claim 10. (currently amended): A computer-readable recording medium recording a program for causing a computer to execute an authentication method of an image processing system in which a host computer and an image processing apparatus are connected to a network, the method comprising:

a first request step of, at the host computer, issuing a request for authentication to the image processing apparatus when the host computer remotely operates the image processing apparatus;

a transmission step of, at the image processing apparatus, transmitting data for specifying the authentication apparatus, which performs an authentication process on an operation level of the remote operation, to the host computer in a case where the host computer is authenticated in response to the request in the first request step ~~remotely operates the image processing apparatus~~;

a second request step of, at the host computer, issuing a request for the authentication process to the authentication apparatus based on the data transmitted in the transmission step; ~~and~~

an authentication step of, at the ~~host computer~~ authentication apparatus,

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performing the authentication process in response to the request in the second request step

~~causing the authentication apparatus specified by the data to perform an authentication process with respect to an operation level of the remote operation from the host computer to the image processing apparatus~~; and

a remote operation step of, at the host computer, remotely operating the image processing apparatus in accordance with the operation level authenticated ~~by the authentication apparatus~~ in ~~said~~ the authentication step.